



## INVESTING IN NORTHUMBERLAND

- » In December 2006, SITA UK and Northumberland County Council signed a 28-year contract with the aim of transforming the way recycling and waste is managed in the county.

### THE CHALLENGE

With both parties keen to set the bar high, ambitious targets have been agreed: by 2012, it is intended that 92 per cent of Northumberland's waste will be diverted from landfill with the help of a number of new facilities and cutting-edge technology.

SITA UK is also working closely with the County Council to boost the amount of waste that is recycled and composted, with the Council aiming to achieve at least 45 per cent by 2012.

### SOLUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Working with Northumberland County Council, SITA UK has provided up-front funding to ensure the swift delivery of a number of key facilities that have delivered a step change in performance to ensure European and national waste targets are met, and to immediately reduce the county's long-standing reliance on landfill.

Planning approval for a £13m state-of-the art sustainable waste management facility in West Sleekburn was granted just four months after the contract with SITA UK was signed. As a result, this facility can now manage up to 120,000 tonnes of recyclables and waste each year.

The 900 square metre site includes a £3.7m materials recycling facility, one of the first of its type in the UK, which uses the latest technology to separate recyclable materials. Visitors are actively encouraged to come to the site and see for themselves the sizeable volume of waste dealt with at the facility, to learn about where it goes and how we can reduce the amount we throw away.

Last year, £12m was invested by SITA UK on major refurbishments at 12 of the 13 household waste recovery centres (HWRCs) it now runs across Northumberland.

This has already resulted in improved recycling, recovery and composting rates, with each centre aiming to recycle at least 63 per cent in 2008/09, increasing to 70 per cent by 2011.



WORKING WITH ...

# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

An energy-from-waste (EfW) facility in the Tees Valley has also been expanded to help prevent the left-over waste that cannot be recycled being sent to landfill. One hundred thousand tonnes of Northumberland's waste is now managed at SITA UK's state-of-the-art facility following a £70m extension. As well as contributing towards the addition of 24 jobs at the plant, the waste from Northumberland helps provide nearly a third of the 30MW of electricity generated by the facility.

SITA UK has worked hard with the Council to develop a positive relationship with the community whilst implementing these many changes. Public exhibitions, meetings, community liaison groups and a range of leaflets and press releases have ensured that local people and service users have been kept up-to-date with the proposed changes, and have had the opportunity to feed back any concerns.

Awareness about sustainable waste management and environmental issues has also been raised through the region's 'Go Green' campaign, including the sponsorship of the annual sustainable school award through the local newspapers.

Community projects have benefited from funding from the SITA Trust, which distributes landfill tax credits voluntarily donated by SITA UK. A riding centre for disabled and non-disabled riders in Morpeth has been awarded £50,000, whilst a Cramlington voluntary youth project received over £30,000 for the creation of a community garden. Nature projects are also regularly supported – the re-introduction of the Red Kite to the North East's countryside was supported by £150,000 of funding to the RSPB.

Projections show that the joint work of SITA UK and Northumberland County Council means we are on target to divert a massive 92 per cent of the county's waste away from landfill by 2012. With landfill tax set to rise to at least £72 per tonne by 2013, the successful partnership will undoubtedly prove to deliver financial, as well as environmental, benefits.



"Employing a company that was able to hit the ground running was very important to Northumberland County Council. Since working with SITA UK we have been able to increase the pace of change significantly – from a very low recycling base of 5-6 per cent in 2000, we are now already up to 38 per cent and still gathering pace. We now also have an extremely high satisfaction rate with our HWRC facilities, with the latest survey showing 100% satisfaction.

SITA UK has exceeded our expectations, especially in terms of delivering the energy-from-waste facility. Clearly one of the key issues was delivering that crucial element of infrastructure, and the fact that SITA UK had already secured planning consent was a major benefit."

*- Paul Jones, Head of Waste Management, Northumberland County Council*